DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 069 95 EA 008 394

TITLE	Needs Assessment. The Best of ERIC, Number 18.
INSTITUTION	Oregon Univ., Eugene. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jul 76
CONTRACT	OEC-0-8-080353-3514
NOTE	5p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403 (free)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; *Annotated Bibliographies; Cultural Pluralism; Disadvantaged Youth; Educational Accountability; *Educational Planning; *Literature Reviews; *Methods; *Needs Assessment; Student Needs

ABSTRACT

Twelve annotations from the ERIC system are intended to give the practicing educator easy access to recent and useful information on the needs assessment process. (MLF)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED125069

Number 18 July 1976

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give the practicing educator easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative, rather than exhaustive, of literature meeting those criteria.

Materials were selected for inclusion from the ERIC catalogs *Resources in Education (RIE)* and *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE).*

This bibliography was prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management for distribution by the American Association of School Administrators and the Association of California School Administrators.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Needs Assessment

California State Department of Education. ***Focus on Promising Practices of Needs Assessment.*** Sacramento: Bureau of Program Planning and Development, 1974. 59 pages. ED 107 745.

This collection of 30 different practices and approaches to assessing the needs of disadvantaged students emphasizes the centrality of systematic, ongoing assessment. Comprehensive needs assessment is essential to developing an effective, consistent compensatory educational program that is compatible with the regular instructional program. The compilers of this collection also point out that formal needs assessment is a necessary prerequisite for receiving state and federal funds for the disadvantaged.

The compilers suggest a seven-step needs assessment process. First, disadvantaged pupils must be identified. Then the district must collect relevant data on the "target pupils." It must also "comprehensively diagnose pupil deficiencies" and analyze and classify common needs. School and community resources that could contribute to the new instructional program must be identified. And "the various legal, societal, and temporal constraints that can affect the educational program" must be taken into account.

The basic areas for needs assessment are language development and mathematics, auxiliary services (such as library and student health services), parent involvement, intergroup involvement, staff development, and evaluation.

Order from EDRS. MF $0.83 HC $3.50. Specify ED number.

Campbell, Paul B. "Needs Assessment in Educational Planning." ***Educational Planning,*** 1, 1 (May 1974), pp. 34-40. EJ 099 389.

All too frequently in education, the needs assessment process is seen in isolation, according to Campbell. Instead, it should be viewed as "an information gathering sub-unit of the planning function," which in turn is a central component of the whole system. When assessment is granted its proper position in system context, it can make a substantial contribution to "changing the educational scene," Campbell asserts.

This author defines two types of assessment. "Facilitative assessment" is concerned with resources, such as staff, buildings, and special programs. These resources are assumed to "produce the results toward which the second type of assessment is directed—student attainment or output." Both types are essential to the overall planning function.

To develop an assessment system, general goals must be defined; objectives, which are specific and observable, must be derived from the goals, and the exact role to be played by assessment data must be determined. A comprehensive set of observable objectives in specific areas is used as the basis for "a series of objectives-based mini-tasks," which can be performed by individual students.

Campbell stresses that "schools and programs" are the targets of his assessment plan, "not teachers and students." Although data on cognitive attainment is emphasized in most assessment plans, he points out that "humanitarian objectives," such as increased tolerance for different points of view, are equally important.

McNeil, John D., and Laosa, Luis. "Needs Assessment and Cultural Pluralism in Schools." ***Educational Technology,*** 15, 12 (December 1975), pp. 25-27. EJ 129 844.

The needs assessment study outlined in this article is intended to "encourage multi-cultural orientations," according to McNeil and Laosa. These authors contend that some needs assessments are little more than a list of school staff desires that fails to reflect the community's values. Some studies offer only "traditional" choices, preventing cultural diversity.

To remedy these difficulties, the authors incorporated three sets of goals into their needs assessment study in a community with a sizable Mexican-American population. One set was derived from the "majority culture" and included such traditional objectives as improvement of fundamental skills and citizenship. A second set of goals was "derived from studies of the Mexican culture." Such qualities as competence in Spanish, respect for elders, and appreciation of Mexican-American culture were components of this set. The third set comprised "enabling goals," those that "would compensate for difficulties Mexican Americans have had as minority persons in majority dominated schools." This set included such objectives as the generation of positive attitudes toward school and personal independence and competence.

Students, teachers, parents, and members of the community were then asked to rate the goals in each set according to im-

EA 008 394

portance. The result of this assessment process was that the goals ranked as high priority were easily translatable into educational plans and instructional programs.

Milwaukee Public Schools. ***School-Based Needs Assessment Procedure. Planning Document 1. Rough Draft.*** Wisconsin: 1972. 11 pages. ED 077 959.

This proposal for a school-based needs assessment is appealing because of its brevity and succinct organization. Devised as a plan for the Milwaukee Public Schools, it would be useful to any school desiring to assess the needs of its students. The authors emphasize that the proper subject of school-based needs assessment is student performance. Such performance "provides the basis for determining other resource needs," which may be identified "later in the program development stage."

Six "goal areas" provide the basis for analyzing the data collected in the assessment. Students should develop facility in communications and other basic skills, appreciation for cultural and aesthetic values, ability to succeed in the working world, "skill in the wise consumption of goods and services," healthy self-esteem, and successful human relations.

School records of student test scores and attendance figures, as well as information collected from questionnaires, serve as the data base for the needs assessment. A committee is charged with reviewing these data and with selecting which needs are to receive priority treatment in the coming school year. The authors suggest that only two or three needs be selected for attention each year.

Order from EDRS. MF $0.83 HC $1.67. Specify ED number.

Morrissett, Irving. "Accountability, Needs Assessment, and Social Studies." ***Social Education,*** 38, 4 (April 1973), pp. 271-279. EJ 075 419.

Morrissett points out that, because of the close relationship between needs assessment and accountability, the two are often confused and are inconsistently defined. His article helps to remedy such confusion.

Although these concepts are closely related, they are not identical. Basically, needs assessment is "a ranking of objectives not being achieved by an educational system." Accountability can very well necessitate such a ranking process, but it is primarily concerned with redressing the discrepancies between what is and what should be.

The two concepts do share certain characteristics. For both needs assessment and accountability, "a broader constituency is assumed." Parents, as well as the general public, have become involved in these processes. Both concepts now emphasize clearly defined, specific goals, and increasing attention is devoted to the measurement of outcomes, as opposed to inputs and processes used to achieve outcomes. Goals are defined in terms of specific, measurable outcomes.

Morrissett outlines a four-step method to assess needs. First, the goals or objectives of a system are established. Then the level of student achievement for each goal is measured. "The amount by which achievement falls short of each of the goals" is determined, thus defining the discrepancies, or needs. And finally, the needs are ranked in order of importance, and priorities are assigned.

Mullen, David J., and Mullen, Rosemary C. ***A Principal's Handbook for Conducting a Needs Assessment Using the School Program Bonanza Game.*** [1974]. 69 pages. ED 113 809.

The School Program Bonanza Game, a survey approach to needs assessment, is intended to determine the overall goals and purposes of a school and not just to assess student achievement in relation to specific behavioral outcomes, according to the Mullens. Its simple format, as well as its broad focus, sets it apart from other needs assessment devices.

The game is "played" by representatives of the whole community, including parents, interested laymen, students, teachers, school staff members, and board of education members. The participants express their educational priorities by choosing among several alternatives in different areas, such as vocational training, basic language and arithmetic skills, and personal development. The choices in these areas are assigned a certain monetary value (some cost more than others). The participants have only a limited amount of "money" to spend on the whole educational program, so they must choose carefully where they want the funds to be spent. Statistical compilation of the results of the game indicates those areas most frequently identified as high priority. A comparison with the school's existing program leads to the definition of needs.

The authors emphasize the importance of involving the whole community in needs assessment. They advocate a thorough public relations program to inform potential participants of the value of this program. And they stress the central role of the principal in winning support for the game.

A brief summary of research on needs assessment and a list of references conclude the report.

Order copies from David J. Mullen, Bureau of Field Studies, College of Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602. $3.50.
Also available from EDRS. MF $0.83 HC $3.50. Specify ED number.

New Jersey State Department of Education. ***Needs Assessment in Education: A Planning Handbook for Districts. Handbook Series on Comprehensive Planning for Local Education Districts, No. 3.*** Trenton: Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation, 1974. 72 pages. ED 089 405.

This planning manual, one of a series of seven, deals with needs assessment as an important element of comprehensive planning in education. In some planning models, assessment even precedes goal development. Needs assessment is a necessary prerequisite to the rest of the planning process, which

includes problem analysis, generation and selection of alternatives, implementation of the selected program, and evaluation.

According to the compilers of this handbook, needs assessment can serve as a valuable means of citizen participation, especially in those school districts experiencing budget passage difficulties. Assessment can also assist those districts having difficulty pinpointing exactly where problems lie in both new and existing programs. Its results can serve as a data base for future educational decisions.

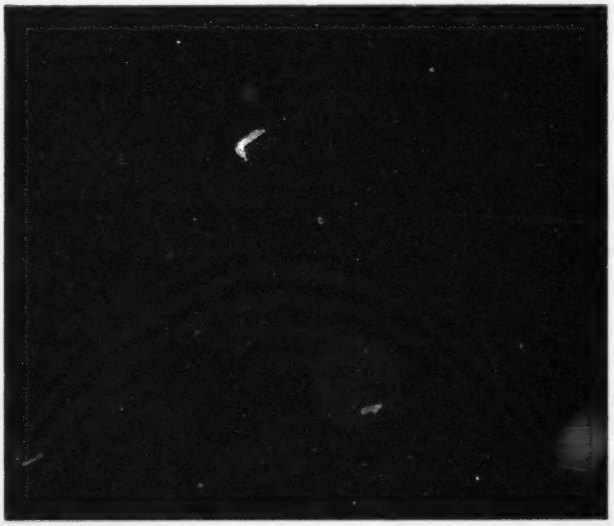
The school board and the administration should initially approve the needs assessment. An administrative team composed of a principal, a vice-principal, and a teacher should oversee the dissemination of information on the assessment to the school staff and community members and should work closely with a committee of students, administrators, community members, teachers, and school board members in the actual implementation of the assessment process.

With this basic organizational apparatus, a school district may choose among four needs assessment models presented in this handbook (the Dallas, Fresno, Phi Delta Kappa, and Worldwide assessment models). These four models were selected for inclusion on the basis of their comprehensiveness, replicability, and reasonable cost. All four have been tested in local school districts, producing the desired results.

Order copies from New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation, 225 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. $2.00.
Also available from EDRS. MF $0.83 HC $3.50. Specify ED number.

New Jersey State Department of Education. ***Planning Bibliography for Education: A Planning Handbook for Districts. Handbook Series on Comprehensive Planning for Local Education Districts, No. 7.*** Trenton: Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation, 1975. 143 pages. ED 113 828.

This bibliography is the last in the New Jersey State Department of Education's handbook series. In addition to the above-cited handbook on needs assessment, other volumes in the series deal with goal development, problem analysis, and program implementation and evaluation.



This bibliography covers all these subtopics of comprehensive planning and includes one section devoted solely to resources on needs assessment. The 30 sources in this section are briefly annotated, and index terms are provided for each. The bibliography also contains a list of information sources, including organizations concerned with dissemination of materials on such topics as needs assessment.

Order copies from New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation, 225 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08625. $3.00.
Also available from EDRS. MF $0.83 HC $7.35. Specify ED number.

Olson, Paul A. "POWER and the National Assessment of Educational Progress." ***National Elementary Principal,*** 54, 6 (July/August 1975), pp. 46-53. EJ 124 185.

"A 'national assessment' almost by definition seeks to homogenize things," according to Olson. Such assessment of educational needs fails to take into account the unique cultural values of the local environment, as well as ignores the whole legal tradition of local control of education, this author argues. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was conceived and executed by education professionals who, according to Olson, view education as having well-defined general goals applicable to all children through a national "delivery system."

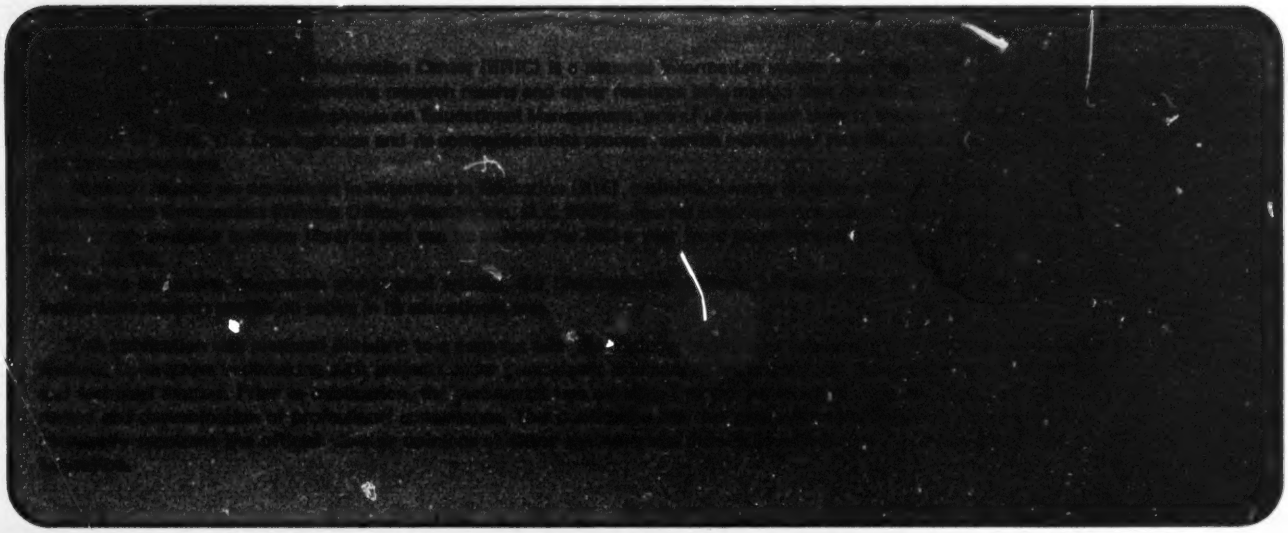
The assumption inherent in a national assessment is that not only are goals the same for all locales, but that needs may be defined in the same terms. This two-part assumption is fallacious, Olson asserts. He states that an assessment based on such premises "offers the appearance of a national consensus with respect to what education should do only by virtue of leaving out many of the concerned parties."

However, the courts have recently reaffirmed the rights of these "concerned parties" to assert their cultural integrity in education. Olson outlines the Supreme Court decisions affirming the local community's right to control local education, including those cases "giving people the right to education in their own language."

The NAEP violates these rights, according to Olson, by incorporating a predominantly white, middle-class cultural bias into its "exercises" (test items). The goals used to ascertain needs are likewise biased. Olson questions the usefulness of the results of such a national assessment to individual communities and schools. The assessment should "permit principals, staff, and parents to relate the assessment to an area's unique culture, resources, problems, environment, and plans for the future." The National Assessment of Educational Progress fails to accomplish this goal.

Rookey, T. Jerome. ***Needs Assessment: Needs and Goals–Model: East Stroudsburg. Project Names Workbook.*** East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania: Educational Development Center, East Stroudsburg State College, 1975. 61 pages. ED 106 989.

Needs assessment is basically a simple undertaking, composed of processes familiar to administrators. Unfortunately, its "actual simplicity and usefulness have become lost in statistics and consultant verbosity," according to Rookey. He states that the East Stroudsburg (Pennsylvania) model is intended to minimize confusion and offer an uncomplicated, economic means of needs assessment.



The needs assessment model presented by Rookey takes about two months to conduct. A "pre-plan" outlining "what is going to happen when, how, and to whom" is formulated by a core committee of administrators, teachers, and community members. This plan is publicized in the community and among the educational staff. Through use of a questionnaire, the district's goals are defined. Program assessment data are compiled from districtwide test scores. Needs are defined by ascertaining the discrepancies between goals and performance. And finally, program decisions based on the assessment must be made.

This workbook includes sample questionnaires and goals, as well as statistical methods to determine the weights (importance) of each set of recommendations.

Order from EDRS. MF $0.83 HC $3.50. Specify ED number.

Tyler, Ralph W. "Some Comments on Power and the NAEP." ***National Elementary Principal,*** 54, 6 (July/August 1975), pp. 54-55. EJ 124 186.

Tyler's article is intended as a response to Olson's criticism of the National Assessment of Educational Progress ("POWER and the National Assessment of Educational Progress"). Tyler asserts that NAEP is not based on "national norms," as Olson maintains. He also points out that Olson chooses to emphasize the cultural diversity and disparity of the United States rather than its cultural unity. But "our nation is both a multicultural society and a highly interdependent one," according to Tyler. The national assessment by definition emphasizes cultural interdependence and commonality. It is intended to indicate the degree to which different age groups possess the basic skills necessary for "constructive participation in a democracy." Such an undertaking is totally in keeping with "our national policy," Tyler states. He does not, like Olson, question the validity of a national educational policy—a policy formulated primarily by professional educators.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress was never intended, as Olson implies, to be an assessment tool for local communities. Instead, it is a broad indicator of abilities for the populations of large regions (the Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Western regions). According to Tyler, it is administered much as an opinion poll. Representative samples of people from four age groups are the data source. Such a format is of course inappropriate for local community assessment.

These two articles give the reader a fairly good idea of the issues involved in national needs assessment—issues that are complex and have no easy resolution.

Witkin, Belle Ruth. ***An Analysis of Needs Assessment Techniques for Educational Planning at State, Intermediate, and District Levels.*** Hayward, California: Alameda County Superintendent of Schools, 1975. 182 pages. ED 108 370.

Only in the last five years or so has needs assessment achieved national prominence, though the concept has been around for a long time. Consequently, "few models or instruments have been extensively field tested for validity and reliability," according to Witkin. And the literature on needs assessment has likewise been somewhat limited. Indeed, this volume is one of the few attempting to deal comprehensively with this subject. It includes a review of the state of the art, descriptions of the most widely available and representative models, and tips on planning and implementing a needs assessment.

Witkin identifies emerging trends in needs assessment that are predicated on the systematic collection of opinion "from many different groups inside and outside of education." She predicts that active community involvement will continue and increase. Although most current assessment models are oriented toward the present, "futurology" techniques entail the development of "scenarios for alternative futures," projecting needs in a much longer time frame. The emergence of a new technology incorporating computer analyses means that "real," as opposed to "apparent," needs of a system will be easier to identify.

Very little is known about the impact of needs assessment on education, according to Witkin. She cautions school districts against putting "all your school and community energy 'eggs' in the needs assessment 'basket'." Assessment is only a first step prior to the planning and implementation of solutions.

Order from EDRS. MF $0.83 HC $10.03. Specify ED number.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403